



Kana Endo, UN Volunteer serving as Communication and Advocacy Assistant with UNRCO in Mongolia, during a tree planting event at Mt Bayanzurkh, Northeast of Ulaanbaatar city, in September 2022.

© UNV, 2022

Volunteering is a gate for you if you want to make a difference

Kana Endo (Japan) serves as a UN Volunteer Communication and Advocacy Assistant with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in Mongolia. She supports communication work ranging from drafting articles, press releases, developing social media content for awareness, and more. To mark International Volunteer Day, 5 December, Kana shares her experience in the pursuit of promoting volunteerism among youth in Mongolia. Her assignment is fully funded by the Government of Japan.

My name is Kana Endo; I hail from Japan. I embarked on my volunteering assignment last September and I will serve until February 2023. I am one of the three international UN Volunteers serving with the United Nations in Mongolia, together with another national UN Volunteer.

Looking back on my childhood, I enjoyed learning new things but at the same time was very shy and introverted. However, I was very passionate

about learning English and cultures in different countries. Therefore, I chose a high school with English course.

My childhood dream came true when I went to Oregon, the United States, for starting my whole new life at Lane Community College in 2019. This was one of the most engaging and eye-opening experience in my life.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted my plan to explore my future in the United States just as it disrupted many people's lives and plans. As the pandemic surged the world, I was transferred to Meiji Gakuin University in Japan where I am currently as senior student majoring in international studies.

I am grateful for the life experiences and opportunities that influenced and helped shape my worldviews and set my life values, which I will use to the fullest.

I found more purpose and ambition to make more impact on the world we live in. Therefore, I jumped on the opportunity to join the UN Volunteers when I heard about this international opportunity to make a difference.

As mentioned earlier, even now I am an introverted and shy person, especially in the new environment and with people. However, it does not matter if you have some courage and passion about something to dive into a whole new world.

I believe that I am the only person who can change me and make things possible. For this reason, I always challenge myself even keeping away from my comfort zone to learn and improve myself.

As a volunteer, I support communication and advocacy with UNRCO in Mongolia. To do so, I create visual content and messages on social platforms to raise awareness of global issues, as well as communicate on what the UN is doing in Mongolia.

One of the most challenging parts of my work is how to localize global topics and find the most effective and interactive ways to communicate with people. Moreover, I am doing the best I can and learning at the same time.

“ My volunteering assignment has validated my life goal and dream to serve in an international

“ organization, like the UN, as I majored in international studies. Before joining the UNV programme, I thought I was well aware and knowledgeable about global issues. However, I found out that there is so much to learn. --Kana Endo, UN Volunteer Communications and Advocacy Assistant with UNRCO

Joining the world's largest organization – the UN – and seeing its work towards the global issues from inside gave me a different perspective. I am now more confident than ever that our actions and engagement as youth are more important to bring positive changes in our communities.

I am very grateful for the opportunities to engage with youths in Mongolia through different existing platforms within the UN in Mongolia, such as UNYAP (United Nations Youth Advisory Panel), Youth Delegate event by the UN Association, and the Model United Nations Event at the National University of Mongolia. I am amazed to see how youths here are highly active and committed to learning about global issues and taking action.

So far, my UNV experience here has been remarkably interesting and meaningful. Before joining the UNRCO here, to be honest, I never pictured myself living in Mongolia. Even though Mongolia and Japan are only five hours of flight away, I just didn't have the chance to visit this country.

In conclusion, my message to the youth is to challenge themselves to gain meaningful knowledge.

“ Sometimes a decision that seems difficult will turn out to be the best opportunity for your growth and give you new perspectives. Be confident and try to take a step away from your comfort zone! With these, you might see a new world.

